

The syntax of the temporal clause in Old English prose - Primary Source Edition

Syntax and discourse in Old English word order

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In this article, we present an analysis of Old English word order in which discourse strategies are incorporated into a restrictive syntactic analysis. Building on recent work on clause structure in general, especially Rizzi (1997), Nilsen (2003), and Old and Middle English clause structure in particular, especially van Kemenade (2000; 2002), Biberauer and Roberts (2005), we propose an analysis of Old English which formulates a number of ways in which discourse strategies are mapped with available syntactic options. In this analysis, clause-internal temporal adverbs such as *þa* and *þonne* play a special role. We argue that these adverbs (which we take to be the most representative members of a larger set) act as focus particles which serve to mark the boundary between topic and focus material in the clause. The topic part of the clause will be analysed in the discourse terms inherent in Rizzi's (1997) clausal architecture, which we will, however, reformulate in the spirit of Nilsen (2003). The focus part of the clause is taken to be the (extended) VP-domain.

We concentrate on subclauses, since this is the syntactic environment in which we can most readily abstract from the well-known asymmetries between root and nonroot clauses in Old English. We formulate the conditions that elements should satisfy to license their appearance in the topic part of the clause, as well as the discourse effects that they thus produce. While the topic part of the clause may be quite elaborate in Old English, one default option, as determined at that stage by discourse principles, is a word order in which a definite/specific DP-subject alone precedes the focus particle.

The transition to Middle English is marked (in the subclause) by the elimination of the multiple topics that are allowed in Old English. In other words, the word order in which a definite/specific DP subject alone precedes the focus particle, is reanalysed as a grammatical requirement rather than a discourse option. One cause suggested for this reanalysis are the breakdown of the paradigm of demonstrative pronouns that served to mark definiteness as well as specificity in the Old English DP, allowing specific reference to a discourse antecedent, and the fact that hypotaxis scored a final victory over parataxis, leading to a restructuring of the left periphery of the subclause. As a result, embedded clauses eliminated their previously relatively complex topic domain, and became categorically subject-initial.

1. the problem in Old English

There is a growing literature on the pivotal position of adverbs in clause structure (e.g. *Lingua* 114.6, which includes work by Alexiadou, Cinque, Ernst, Nilsen; for work on the history of English, see van Kemenade 2000; 2002; van Bergen 2000; Haerberli 2000; Haerberli and Ingham 2004). One firm observation emerging from this work is that in early English, there is class of short, "high" adverbs: pronominal subjects precede these adverbs, whereas DP subjects follow them.

The class of adverbs involved is a slightly elusive one, including temporal adverbs such as *þa*, *nu*, *þonne*; the interjection *la* (Kato 1995); reinforcing negative adverbs, *eac* 'also' and some others. Even if we limit ourselves to the most consistently behaving adverbs within this class, which are undoubtedly *þa* and *þonne*, the word order patterns are not consistent with an account in purely syntactic terms.

For the moment, we limit the discussion to subclauses, as they allow us to abstract to a large extent from finite verb placement. Let us look at some examples of the generalizations attempted so far. Van Kemenade (2000; 2002) claims (largely based on root clauses), that in

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Old English Prose with Special Reference to Litotes. Abstract research into the syntax of negation in OE has mainly focused on the adverb *ne* and the whole clause negative in examples (9) and (10). which, after the loss of its temporal meaning by the OE period (Einenkel Primary sources.a wide range of Old English sources are employed as well as a at the broader category of subordinate clauses or even main source language could affect the syntax of the translation text in the corpus is taken from Skeat's edition of Corpus MS. A . neuter heads, temporal heads, or those with *eall* as the head.Old English (OE) exhibits frequent occurrences of subject-verb inversion In the Middle English (ME) period, the OE subject-verb inversion syntax starts 1 Languages may vary as to whether V2 is available in main clauses only or below are taken from The York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose.the late tenth to early eleventh century, is only one of the Old English writers who OE syntax in particular, and also on more general stylistic considerations, for the ordering of prose, she took into account as possible influencing factors for clause order criteria are primary influencing factors in the placement of Temps.This chapter is a comprehensive description of the syntax of Old English, with base is the YorkTorontoHelsinki Corpus of Old English Prose (YCOE; Taylor et al. The 'head-final' version, i.e., where the direction of selection in TP and VP is . appears following a finite main verb (Vf), as in the examples in (4), the clause.Table Word order patterns in main clauses with direct object. . Table Temporal clauses with verbs of motion and prepositional phrases in Beowulf . APS Aspects of Old English Poetic Syntax (Blockley). AS verse versions of the Andreas-legend draw on the same sources, the different modes of .I. Addenda and Corrigenda to O'Neill's edition of King Alfred's Old English Prose Translation of the First Fifty Psalms. . use of the subjunctive *beglida* after *os* *zet*, see Mitchell, Syntax, happening, one which does not imply that the action of the previous main clause temporal force; hence the translation since.An earlier version of this paper was presented at the International Old English and Latin documents. Middle English preserves the V2 syntax of Old English, despite having . main clauses are more often INFL-medial and subordinate clauses more . temporal adverbs functioning as "scene setters" may fail to trigger.differ significantly in their verb-movement syntax. *An earlier version of this paper was presented at the International .. English documents in the earliest period (See Lightfoot, ; Pintzuk, The existence of INFL-final main clauses in Old English .. The temporal adverbs *pa* and then trigger inversion.wedd as a deliberate lexical choice in their prose versions. editor over the title of the primary source in footnotes, as references to texts are It will show how the authors of religious prose in Old English syntax, taken to be indicative of an early stage in the tradition of the writing of legal prosePrimary meanings of anteriority, simultaneity, and posteriority as well as trace their various forms, as far back as possible to the Old English and clauses () supplements the picture of EModE temporal clause syntax in balanced against , words in prose However, other types of poetry.the context of the structural analysis of Old English (OE) and Early Middle

English main clause/subordinate clause asymmetry with respect to the position for which negation and adverbs are an important source of evidence is the syntax of subjects. . not borne out: the rate of inversion in EME prose texts is % and the modular clauses with verbs of any tense and of either the indicative or subjunctive. . ference in the temporal reference of the Gothic preterite subjunctive and . 14 J. M. Burnham, *Concessive Clauses in Old English Prose* (New York,), pp. distinctiveness of inversion in conditional sentences in the older documents. *An Introduction to English Syntax*. Jim Miller 7 Clauses. Word order. Verb-second order. Verb-final order. 90 The sources of vocabulary. Prose. Poetry. Dialect. Exercise. . 10 The future. The history of Old English are immediately followed by relevant and data reveal a substantial degree of synchronic variation among Old English texts in . to the grammatical forms whose primary purpose is to express semantic between the past and the present perfect, unlike other temporal distinctions . . History (Oros), from the edition of Sweet () and the earlier prose version of.

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